

On December 13, I joined Congressman Tom Price of Georgia and 32 other members of the House of Representatives in introducing H.R. 4464, the English in the Workplace Act of 2007. This legislation would amend the Civil Rights Act to clarify that employers are legally permitted to establish policies requiring their employees to speak English on the job.

For several years, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, a federal agency, has been filing legal complaints against the Salvation Army on the grounds that its English-in-the-workplace policy is "discriminatory." Even though the Salvation Army - a charitable organization that exists to help the poor, the sick, and the disabled - gives its employees a full year to learn English, the EEOC continues to use taxpayer money to finance its frivolous litigation.

I believe the EEOC's policy is outrageous. For immigrants throughout our nation's history, learning English has been an essential part of assimilating to American culture and succeeding in the workforce. On November 8, I and a majority of House members voted for a motion to block the EEOC from using federal funding to pursue its lawsuit. However, subsequent news reports have stated that Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other House Democratic leaders are determined to block this provision from being signed into law.

While I will continue to support the ban on EEOC funding at every opportunity, I believe H.R. 4464 is an even better approach because it would change the law to fix this problem once and for all. No employer in this country should ever have to worry about being sued for encouraging employees to learn English.